



Legislation Text

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City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: APRIL 2, 2014

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: RASHAD M. YOUNG, CITY MANAGER/s/

DOCKET TITLE:

Update on the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan/Complete Streets Design Guidelines Manual, and Consideration of a Resolution to Establish an Advisory Committee. [ROLL-CALL VOTE]

ISSUE: Update on the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan Update and Complete Streets Design Guidelines Manual, and Resolution to establish an Ad Hoc Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan Advisory Committee.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council:

- (1) Receive the update;
- (2) Approve the resolution establishing an Ad Hoc Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan Advisory Committee;
- (3) Request that the Chairs of the Planning Commission, Transportation Commission, Parks and Recreation Commission, Traffic and Parking Board, Commission on Aging, Commission on Persons with Disabilities, and Alexandria Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee each nominate a member of their group to serve on the Advisory Committee; and,
- (4) Authorize the City Manager to appoint the remaining members and designate the Chair of the Advisory Committee.

BACKGROUND: The City's 2008 Transportation Master Plan envisions a transportation system that encourages the use of alternative modes of transportation, reduces dependence on the automobile, and promotes a balance between travel efficiency and quality of life. These enhancements will provide Alexandrians with more transportation choices, continued economic growth, and a healthy environment. This system will lead to the establishment of transit-oriented, pedestrian friendly village centers, focused on neighborhood preservation

and increased community cohesion, forming a more urban, vibrant and sustainable Alexandria.

The City also completed a Pedestrian and Bicycle Mobility Plan in 2008 which is data rich and serves as an implementation tool for the Transportation Master Plan. Since that time, staff has completed many important projects to improve walking and bicycling in the City, and many more are currently underway.

In 2011, the City adopted a Complete Streets Policy resolution which expanded staff to include a full time Complete Streets Coordinator, and initiated Capital Bikeshare (Bikeshare Program), both of which continue to expand citywide. This policy resolution will be brought back to Council this Spring for consideration of re-enactment.

Given the many pedestrian and bicycle projects and initiatives completed over the past five years, including the Bikeshare Program, as well as the adoption of the Complete Streets Policy, the City will undertake an effort to incorporate these additions into an updated Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan and development of a Complete Streets Design Guidelines Manual. In addition, staff is recommending appointment of a Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan Advisory Committee to provide guidance on the project.

DISCUSSION: The purpose of this update to the City’s Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan and development of a Complete Streets Design Guidelines Manual (“Project”) is to:

- Develop a non-motorized system that addresses the needs of all users (pedestrians, bicyclists, vehicles, and transit riders) and is consistent with the Transportation Master Plan that encourages transportation options, reducing dependence on the private automobile;
- Develop both a bicycle and pedestrian network and hierarchy, based on identification of major activity centers or destinations (including existing and projected development and Metrorail and fixed transit stations); and
- Develop a framework for implementing non-motorized policies and projects citywide;

In developing the bicycle and pedestrian networks hierarchy and framework, the following principles and objectives should be considered:

- Respect the character of existing neighborhoods
- Balance needs of all users
- Identify existing and future bicycle parking areas, pedestrian and bicycle way-finding opportunities, and innovative on-street bicycle facilities (such as cycle tracks, bicycle boulevards, etc.)
- Develop criteria to prioritize public pedestrian and bicycle improvements
- Identify and resolve key gaps in the walking and bicycling network; and
- Raise the City’s “Bicycle Friendly Community” and a “Walk Friendly Community” award level to Platinum (The City was recently named a Silver level Bicycle Friendly Community (BFC) by the League of American Bicyclists, recognizing the City’s commitment to improving conditions for bicycling through investment in education and safety programs, bicycling promotion, and infrastructure)

- Plan for Bikeshare expansion;

PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE MASTER PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Staff is recommending appointment of an Ad Hoc Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan Advisory Committee (the “Advisory Committee”) to provide guidance on the project, and will be responsible for reviewing and providing comment on key deliverables, and providing input on project recommendations. Larger community meetings will complement the Advisory Committee work, focusing on visioning, issue identification, and the Plan framework. Online engagement will play an integral role in receiving input, updating the public on the progression of the planning process, and providing a platform for polling, comments, and feedback on specific questions.

Mission: The mission of the Advisory Committee is to make recommendations to City staff on the Update of the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan, and Complete Streets Design Guidelines Manual.

Tasks: The Advisory Committee will provide recommendations during the Update of the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan and Complete Streets Design Guidelines Manual planning process. The Committee’s main role will be to provide guidance on issues including:

- Identifying pedestrian and bicycle issues / needs
- Providing input on policy recommendations
- Providing input on the development of the pedestrian and bicycle networks
- Providing input on project recommendations and design standards
- Providing input on development of criteria for prioritizing project recommendations

The Committee will also receive community input during a series of community wide meetings and online engagement.

Advisory Committee Composition: The Advisory Committee is proposed to consist of twelve members appointed by the City Manager. The City Manager will designate one of the members to serve as the Chair of the Committee. The Advisory Committee is proposed to have the following representation:

- Transportation Commission designee (1 member)
- Planning Commission (1 member)
- Traffic & Parking Board (1 member)
- Parks & Recreation Commission (1 member)
- Commission on Aging (1 member)
- Commission on Persons with Disabilities (1 member)
- Alexandria Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) (1 member)
- At Large Citizen Representatives (3 members)
- Professional in the Urban Design or Landscape Architecture field (1 member)
- Business Community (1 member)
- Total (12 members)

The Chairs of the above named groups will be asked to nominate a member of their group to serve on the Advisory Committee. The remaining slots will be appointed by the City Manager based on a call for nominations publicized through the City’s eNews service, notices to civic, business, and community associations, and the City’s website.

Process and Reporting: The following decision making structure would be utilized:

- Formal voting will only be used to get a sense of the group preferences on issues and recommendations.
- In cases where common ground cannot be identified, dissenting members may include a minority opinion report or letter to ensure an accurate reflection of the viewpoints of the Advisory Committee.
- The Advisory Committee will support the public outreach process by reporting back to the boards, commissions, groups and civic groups that they represent and communicate to the Advisory Committee any positions, comments, or advice from the groups they represent.

Expectations of Members:

- Attend all meetings. When absence is unavoidable, members are encouraged to review all information and completing any assignments provided for the missed meeting;
- Arrive at meetings prepared by doing any assigned reading or tasks;
- Support the process and each other in finding solutions to the assigned tasks; and
- Serve as a conduit to the community or commissions by keeping them informed of the activities of the planning effort and bringing their ideas and concerns back to the group.

Responsibilities of the Chair:

- Preside over meetings;
- Serve as a spokesperson for the Advisory Committee; and
- Work with City staff to set agendas for Advisory Committee meetings.

Communication and Outreach: Consistent with the principles of *What's Next Alexandria*, City staff will keep the public informed of the schedule, issues, materials and progress of the Advisory Committee through the Update of the City's Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan and Complete Streets Design Guidelines Manual project webpage as well as multiple other outreach methods including eNews, social media, posted flyers and community volunteers. Advisory Committee meetings will be open to the public.

Staff Support: City staff will provide support to the Advisory Committee through an Interdepartmental City work group (also known as the Technical Advisory Committee), led by staff of the Department of Transportation and Environmental Services (T&ES). The Technical Advisory Committee will also include staff from other departments and offices such as the Department of Planning and Zoning, Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities, the Alexandria Police Department, the Department of Project Implementation, and Alexandria City Public Schools.

Next Steps: It is intended that the Advisory Committee will begin meeting in May 2014 and meet regularly throughout the planning process to discuss the topics outlined above.

Sunset: The Advisory Committee will sunset upon City Council approval of the Update of the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan and Complete Streets Design Guidelines Manual.

FISCAL IMPACT: The FY 2014 approved Capital Improvement Program (CIP) includes \$500,000 for FY 2014 to complete the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan update as well as to develop Complete Streets Guidelines Manual. The budget includes funding to conduct public outreach, including the establishment of the Advisory Committee.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1: Resolution

Attachment 2: Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan Presentation

STAFF:

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